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RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 2098

RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 001884

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/W, AF/RSA, DRL, INR/AA;  
USAID FOR AFR/WA (DALZOUMA)

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TAGS: PGOV PREL EFIN PHUM SNAR GV NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN NUGGETS -- OCTOBER 16, 2009

REF: A. ABUJA 1036

1B. ABUJA 0307

Classified By: Political Counselor James P. McAnulty  
for reasons in Sections 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) Mission Nigeria provides the following compilation of recent political, economic, and social developments not previously reported.

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GUINEAN PROTESTERS IN LAGOS DEMAND CIVIL RULE  
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12. (SBU) Members of the Guinean community in Lagos organized a protest march October 14 to demand an end to military rule in Guinea. Three hundred protesters marched in streets displaying placards, chanting protest songs deriding Guinean military leader Moussa Dadis Camara, and carrying a mock coffin. Some placards sought the U.S. President's intervention. The demonstrators held a protest rally in front of the Lagos office of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a few blocks from Consulate Lagos' Public Affairs section. Speakers took turns urging Nigerian President Yar'Adua's intervention, in his capacity as ECOWAS Chairman, to restore democratic rule immediately and curb alleged atrocities. According to the press, protest coordinator Muhammed Ba alleged Guinean military engagement in serious human rights abuses, including killing over 500 Guineans who openly demanded a return to civil rule.

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RIBADU'S RISKY TRIP TO NIGERIA ADDS TO HIS PROFILE  
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13. (C) Former Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chief of Staff Dapo Olorunyomi told International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Officer about former Chairman Nuhu Ribadu's surreptitious visit to pay his respects to his mentor and deceased human rights activist Gani Fawehinmi. According to Olorunyomi, against the advice of his close confidants, Ribadu flew to a neighboring country and drove through the porous Nigeria-Benin border unimpeded by security agents as no watch list apparently listed his name. After attending ceremonies at the mortuary, viewing the corpse, and paying his respects to the late Gani's family, Ribadu drove back immediately and exited Nigeria safely within eight hours of entry. Olorunyomi noted that

Ribadu's fierce sense of loyalty to his former mentor and his strong belief in fatalism drove him to undertake this reckless act. Olorunyomi, now Enterprise Director for the new Lagos-based business newspaper daily "NEXT," remarked that these actions have added to Ribadu's universal popular appeal should he, as widely speculated, run for public office. He noted that like-minded people around him, including former Federal Capital Territory Governor Nasir El-Rufai, have tried to push him in that direction.

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INL SCANNERS LEAD TO DRUG TRAFFICKING ARRESTS  
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¶4. (U) The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) arrested Agbabiaka Lukman, a Lagos State University student, September 30 at Lagos's Murtala Mohammed International Airport for testing positive for cocaine during a screening by INL-donated body scanners while attempting to board an Arik Airlines flight to London. The student confessed that Adegbemisola Adedeji, a notorious recruiter of drug couriers deported from London in May, had given him drugs to transport to London in exchange for 2,500 British pounds. Lukman ingested 59 cocaine wraps. Police arrested three other suspects, Hassan Akeem Olamide, Nnoli Sebastine Iyke, and Nandi Nicholas, after undergoing inspection with body scanners, with the first two arriving from Sao Paulo, Brazil, on South African Airlines flights September 27 and 29, respectively. Olamide carried one kilogram of cocaine hidden in waistband packages, while Iyke ingested a few wraps. NDLEA determined that Nicholas had ingested 80 wraps of

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cocaine weighing 1.315 kilograms before attempting to board an Iberia Airlines flight to France September 26.

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TURKEY FEARS NIGERIAN "SUITCASE" TRAVEL  
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¶5. (SBU) Turkish diplomats told Poloffs October 14 that their government (GOT) has focused much of its outreach in Nigeria on education. The GOT operates one of Kaduna's most prestigious private schools, which President Yar'Adua's son attends, and funds 30 undergraduate and graduate scholarships for Nigerian students to attend universities in Turkey. The GOT plans to build a new university outside Abuja that would follow Turkish curriculum and employ Turkish professors. The Turkish DCM expressed concern over increasing immigration fraud from Nigeria and Nigerians increasing travel to Turkey for the sole purpose of filling suitcases with Turkish-made goods for resale in Nigeria. Turkey fears that this practice may lower the perceived quality of Turkish goods within Africa, similar to what has happened with Chinese goods.

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2006 COURT CASE DRAGS ON  
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¶6. (U) The court case of the 18 men arrested in Bauchi State in 2006 for "addressing each other as women and dressing themselves as women," which Shari'a law holds as illegal, experienced yet another postponement. Earlier, according to Global Rights Program Officer Zaharadeen Gambo, court officials cancelled a July 28 hearing after individuals kidnapped the judge and threatened him and court attendees, who hurriedly dispersed, during Boko Haram violence. Now, the court has rescheduled the case from October 13 to November 12. Meanwhile, defendants' legal fees mount, while their court date moves further away.

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LAUNCH OF MEGA PARTY DELAYED  
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¶7. (SBU) Conference of Nigeria Political Parties National Publicity Secretary Osita Okechukwu told PolCouns October 15 that proponents of a "mega party" have delayed its launch from October 7 to "form one pack" with all political parties not aligned with the ruling People's Democratic Party. He acknowledged some political parties would not dissolve out of concern over losing the stipend granted each party, but said they aimed to convince such parties to support the "mega party" candidate, rather than putting forth their own candidates. The press reported October 9 that former Head of State General Muhammadu Buhari, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, and former Sokoto State Governor Attahiru Baifarawa renounced their political ambitions to permit the new party's emergence in the North.

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EXPERT SAYS STIMULUS PACKAGE WILL HAVE NO IMPACT  
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¶8. (SBU) Financial Derivatives Managing Director Bismarck Rewane told Lagos Business School monthly meeting participants October 6 that the GON's recently-announced plan to disburse a two-billion dollar stimulus package from the Excess Crude Account (ECA) will exert no impact on the economy. He claimed federal, state, and local governments had shared over 10 billion dollars during the past 18 months with no clear indication on how the money was spent. Rewane said Nigeria's large informal sector and high corruption rate made fiscal stimulus ineffective. After the new two-billion dollar disbursement, the ECA will have 7 billion dollars remaining from its 2008 maximum of 20 billion dollars.

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OIL SPILLS INCREASING  
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¶9. (U) National Oil Spills Detection and Response Agency

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(NOSDRA) Director General Dr. Ajakaiye announced that 2,122 oil spills occurred in Nigeria between January 2006 and June ¶2009. Ajakaiye told the press that Nigeria's oil spill incidents had grown from 252 in 2006, to 597 in 2007, and to 927 in 2008. An additional 346 oil spills occurred during the first half of 2009. NOSDRA Zonal Director Olubunmi Akindele in Wari, Delta State, confirmed these statistics to us.

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YOUTHS TRAINED IN THE NIGER DELTA  
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¶10. (U) Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research (NIOMR) officials told PolEconoff October 7 that they trained over 500 Niger Delta youths in catfish farming and shrimp cultivation. Officials said even more youths will receive training under the rehabilitation and reintegration programs, assuming post-amnesty peace continues. This research institute, working to improve genetically the quality and yield of African catfish, would like to equip Niger Delta youth with skills to find gainful employment and avoid militancy. NIOMR officials said the Rivers state government will improve an out-station youth training facility at Buguma to train 5,000 youths in catfish farming and shrimp cultivation, with training open to former militants.

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2010 EDUCATION DATA SURVEY LAUNCHED  
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¶11. (U) The Nigerian National Population Commission (NPopC) launched the Nigerian 2010 Education Data Survey (NEDS), with funding provided by a partnership involving USAID and DFID, to generate data on education enrollment and performance to

policy-makers and program managers supervising basic education in Nigeria. Sponsors will link NEDS data with the recently completed 2008 Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey, also conducted by NPopC with USAID support.

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1,800 PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS ATTEND COLLEGE FAIRS  
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¶12. (U) Over 1,300 students and graduates participated in the U.S. Mission Education Advising Center's Eleventh Annual College Fair and Career Day October 6 to 7 in Abuja, with former Nigerian Senate President Ken Nnamani delivering rousing keynote remarks about his own experiences as a graduate student in the United States. On October 8, over 500 prospective students attended a similar event sponsored by CG Lagos. Nigeria now sends more students to study in the United States than any other African country.

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REALITY TV PROGRAM BEGINS FILMING AT CONSULATE  
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¶13. (U) Filming of the new Inspire Africa reality television program "The Debaters" began October 15, when the initial 14 contestants visited the Information Resource Center of the Consulate General in Lagos in the public diplomacy section. They will return each Thursday for 10 weeks. The program, to be filmed also in the University of Lagos and British Council libraries, aims to raise the level of civil discourse in Olibraries, aims to raise the level of civil discourse in Nigeria.

¶14. (U) Embassy Abuja and Consulate General Lagos collaborated on this telegram.

SANDERS